

PRESS RELEASE

September 14, 1990

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DANCE PROGRAMS COMPLEMENT YORUBA EXHIBITION

African influence on the cultural arts of the Americas is perhaps most apparent in music and dance. One dancer finds evidence of a tradition rooted in Africa in "both the mesmerizing effect of the music and the hypnotic effect of dance drumming," and points out that both characterize the art of the African diaspora.

During the month of October, two groups will bring the brilliance and exuberance of African-derived dance and music to Gartner Auditorium at The Cleveland Museum of Art. The Imani African-American Dance Company will perform works from Africa and the Americas on Wednesday, October 10, 1990, at 7 pm--the first evening that **Yoruba: Nine Centuries of African Art and Thought** is open to the public. Founded in 1980 with the encouragement and support of Marjorie Witt Johnson, founder of the Karamu Dancers in 1935, Imani is the only resident African-American dance company in Cleveland. Imani has performed throughout Ohio and other Midwestern states under the artistic direction of Linda Thomas-Jones, always keeping as its mission to "identify and demonstrate the continuum of the African experience in America today."

On Sunday, October 21, 1990, at 4 pm The Group Alafia will present an afternoon of Afro-Brazilian and Afro-Cuban music and dance. Group leader Clyde Alafiju Morgan says, "Alafia (the Yoruba word for 'peace') celebrates African values within the context of art and culture." Every work on their program has historical roots in West Africa. Sacred dances from the Yoruba tradition, poetry, drumming, hymns, Afro-Brazilian martial arts, and traditional audience call and response are included.

Morgan is an alumnus of Cleveland's Karamu Dancers and Cleveland State University and has performed with numerous companies including those of Jose Limon, Michael Babatunde Olatunji, Sophie Maslow, Daniel Nagrin, Louis Falco, Pearl Lang, and Anna Sokolow. He has served as choreographer and artistic director for such international dance companies as the Grupo de Danca Contemporanea da Universidade Federal Da Bahia in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, and has performed in France, Germany, Haiti, Algeria, and West Africa. Morgan has taught at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and is currently associate professor of dance at the State University of New York (SUNY) at Brockport.

Joining Morgan in this Art Museum performance are Claudia Melrose, member of the dance faculty at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and leader of the Melrose Motion Company; Morgan's wife Maria Lais Morgan, adjunct professor of dance and former chair of the dance department at Universidade Federal Da Bahia in Brazil; their son, Clyde G.; percussionist Stephan Collins, lecturer in the dance department at SUNY at Brockport; and, performing in the Afro-Cuban tradition, drummer Carlos "Quinto" Equis-Aguilla.

These performances are two of the many public programs accompanying **Yoruba: Nine Centuries of African Art and Thought**. Admission is free and limited paid parking is available. For more information call 421-7340, ext. 413.

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Yoruba: Nine Centuries of African Art and Thought was organized by The Center for African Art in New York, with the support of grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the New York State Council on the Arts. The Cleveland showing is assisted by the Ohio Arts Council. Many public programs have been made possible by LTV Steel.

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